

Radiation at Hunters Point Naval Shipyard – NBC response – DRAFT 3/24/2016

From Elizabeth Wagner, NBC, March 18, 2016, via email to Lily Lee, EPA:

Q. Can you please let us know what if any action the US EPA has taken in response to the admission by Navy contractor Tetra Tech that it falsified data and mishandled soil samples on Hunters Point? Has the US EPA reviewed any samples or required a resampling of any parcels on Hunters Point? If so, who performed the review? What was found?

A. The Navy is the lead agency responsible for the investigation and cleanup of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard (HPNS). EPA, as lead regulatory agency, and its state regulatory agency partners oversee and enforce Navy compliance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (commonly called the Superfund law) to ensure the cleanup at HPNS protects human health and the environment. As part of that role, both EPA and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) have independently scanned for radionuclides at HPNS.

In 2012, the Navy's internal quality control review of work by its contractor, Tetra Tech, discovered discrepancies from the results they would have expected in some HPNS soil samples. Subsequently, Tetra Tech conducted an internal investigation, resampled the areas of concern, and excavated soil that had levels of contamination above health-based cleanup goals. Tetra Tech summarized their actions in a report to the Navy dated April 2014.

EPA—along with CDPH and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)—reviewed the sampling results in the April 2014 report carefully. No cleanup decisions had been made using the questionable data and future cleanup decisions will be based on the corrected data. ~~No harm had come to the public's health or the environment based on the earlier inaccurate testing.~~

EPA will continue to closely review information about any new allegations that come to light and to monitor the actions of the Navy and other agencies with regard to work by Tetra Tech to inform any further EPA action.

~~Multiple agencies~~Other agencies also play different roles related to radiation at HPNS. For example, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and CDPH oversee the licensing of radiation cleanup service providers, such as Tetra Tech. After concluding its investigation of Tetra Tech at HPNS, NRC recently issued a notice of apparent violation and is considering escalated enforcement action.

~~EPA will continue to closely review information about any new allegations that come to light and to monitor the actions of the Navy and other agencies with regard to work by Tetra Tech to inform any further EPA action.~~

For more information on the HPNS investigation and cleanup, contact William Franklin, Navy public affairs officer: (619) 524-5433, [[HYPERLINK "mailto:william.d.franklin@navy.mil"](mailto:william.d.franklin@navy.mil)].

Commented [RT1]: I wonder if this is potentially misleading without further explanation. My understanding is that CDPH sometimes takes its own samples or analyzes split samples, but that it doesn't happen across the board. Not sure what direct sampling EPA has done. In other words, we do rely on the Navy's data and our own sampling wouldn't be sufficient on its own.

Commented [RT2]: I deleted your last sentence below because I think it sounds defensive and says more than we want to say.

Commented [RT3]: Is this confusing since the samples were confirmation samples?

For more information about Tetra Tech's NRC license, contact Diane Screnci, NRC public affairs officer: 610-337-5330.